

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCSE-00 CU-04 PA-02 USIA-15 EB-07

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R 131030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5657

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 3013

L/EB FOR TRIMBLE, NEA/INS FOR TELEEN

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: CASC NP

SUBJ: AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL EVEREST EXPEDITION

REF: STATE 169296

1. FISCHER FLEW TO BANGKOK JULY 9 TO SUPERVISE LOADING OF EXPEDITION EQUIPMENT. ENTIRE SEA SHIPMENT HAS NOW BEEN CLEARED THROUGH CUSTOMS AND FISCHER HAS PAID RNAC APPROXIMATELY \$11,000 FOR FREIGHT AND PAID CUSTOMS DUTIES AND TAXES OF APPROXIMATELY \$2,200. OXYGEN HAS ARRIVED IN GOOD CONDITION. WE ARE WAITING 26 ADDITIONAL CARTONS DUE TO ARRIVE FROM BANGKOK JULY 13 TO BE CLEARED THROUGH CUSTOMS JULY 16. PLEASE ASSURE THAT SUFFICIENT FUNDS ARE DEPOSITED IN FISCHER ACCOUNT BY COB JULY 17. FORTY-FIVE PAIRS OF TECHNICA BOOTS HAVE BEEN CLEARED.

2. IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO LOAD CARTONS IN NUMERICAL ORDER. CHENEY STRONGLY URGES THAT WE SEND 200 PORTER LOADS IN ADVANCE IN ORDER TO PREVENT OVERLOADING CAPACITY OF VILLAGES EN ROUTE TO FEED CARAVAN. HE PROPOSED TO HAVE FIRST GROUP LEAVE KATHMANDU JULY 25 OR 26 WITH KEROSENE, AS WELL AS THOSE CARTONS WHICH ARE OBVIOUSLY DESTINED FOR USE AT BASE CAMP. (X400-X414, B1-B-27 AS WELL AS HIGH ALTITUDE RATIONS.) IN ANY EVENT IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SORT OUT GEAR IN KATHMANDU GIVEN WEATHER CONDITIONS. WE ARE NOW

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PLANNING TO USE KUMJUNG ABOVE NAMCHE BAZAR AS STAGING AREA

WHERE GEAR WILL BE ASSEMBLED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SHERPUS. ASSUMING PACKING LISTS ARE CORRECT SUGGEST YOU ALLOW FISCHER AND CHENEY AUTHORITY TO SEND ON 200 LOADS AHEAD OF TEAM'S ARRIVAL.

3. WE CAN ARRANGE THAT ICE FALL PORTERS ARE LOCALLY EQUIPPED, ALTHOUGH THIS MAY REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL CASH PAYMENT (\$300-400) TO HAVE THEM PURCHASE EQUIPMENT IN KATHMANDU OR NAMCHE. WILL DISCUSS WITH PASNAG KAMI WHEN ARRIVES JULY 15, BI
E AGREE IT MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF HIGH ALTITUDE SHERPAS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT TO ENLARGED PARTY. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE RECOMMEND CLOSING ICEFALL IN VIEW OF NUMBERS OF NOW SCHEDULED TO CLIMB TO ADVANCE BASE.

4. MOUNTAIN TRAVEL WILL MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGMENTS FOR COMPANIONS ON TREK TO BASE CAMP. LOGISTICALLY, THIS MAY PRESENT SOME COMPLICATIONS IN VIEW OF NEW TREKKING REGULATIONS. CHENEY IS CURRENTLY PLANNING ON SENDING THREE GROUPS OF PORTERS TO BASE CAMP: FIRST PARTY TO DEPART LATE JULY, SECOND PARTY TO BE LED BY PASANG KAMI WOULD LEAVE AUGUST 1 IF POSSIBLE WITH HALF THE GROUP, THIRD PARTY TO DEPART AUGUST 2 WITH REMAINING MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO BE LED BY JOE REINHARD. IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE ALL REDTAPE BY AUGUST 1 AND WE HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT EXPEDITION CAN ARRIVE JULY 28. IF YOU AGREE WITH CHENEY SUGGESTION TO SEND ADVANCE PORTER LOADS, WE WELCOME ARRIVAL OF ONE OR TWO MEMBERS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO ASSIST WITH SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT JOB OF SORTING IT ALL OUT, INCLUDING OUTSTANDING QUESTION OF RADIOS.

5. MINISTRY APPEARS TO HAVE DUG IN ITS HEELS ON ISSUE OF BACKUP RADIOS. IN VIEW OF FACT THAT WASHINGTON POST NO LONGER INVOLVED, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER MOVING RACAL OUT OF NAMCHE TO ADVANCE BASE. THIS, TOO, REQUIRED MINISTRY APPROVAL WHICH HAS BEEN REFUSED AT TIMES IN PAST. MINISTRY IS ANXIOUS TO ASSURE THAT LOASON OFFICER IS IN POSITION TO MONITOR RADIO USE AT ALL TIMES.

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6. NEW REGULATIONS RESTRICT USE OF FIREWOOD AT BASE CAMP. WE HAVE ARRANGED TO BRING UP 30 LARGE CONTAINERS OF INDUSTRIAL LP GAS AND TWO INDUSTRIAL COOKERS FOR USE AT BASE CAMP. COST WILL BE ABOUT \$300 WHICH IS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN WE WOULD EXPECT TO PAY FOR WOOD.

7. CANDLES ARE READILY AVAILABLE IN KATHMANDU. BUTANE GAS CARTRIDGES ARE APPROXIMATELY \$1 PER CANNISTER. ADVISE IF

YOU WANT US TO PURCHASE.

8 WE ARE PLEASED TO HEAR OF PLANNED COVERAGE BY CBS. FISCHER CAN ARRANGE SECURE STORAGE FOR EQUIPMENT BUT AS WITH OTHER SHIMPENTS, WE NEED INVOICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO APPLY FOR IMPORT LICENSE. IN ADDITION IT IS FAR EASIER, IF NOT MANDATORY, THAT CBS CRES BE LISTED AS FULL MEMEBERS OF EXPEDITION VIS-VIS GOVERNMENT. WE NEED NAMES AND BIO INFORMATON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF NECESSARY, HOWEVER, THIS CAN BE ARRANGED WITH MINISTRY AFTER ARRIVAL OF ADVANCE EXPEDITION TEAM.

9. FOLLOWING HELICOPTERS ARE AVAILABLE IN NEPAL. ONE BELL JET RANGER CHARTERED FROM PRIVATE COMPANY AT \$375 PER HOUR (TWO HOUR ROUND TRIP FROM KATHMANDU TO BASE CAMP), THREE ALOUETTE-3 CHOPPERS AVAILABLE AT SAME FEE FROM ARMY, AND ONE ARMY PUMA CAN BE RENTED FOR ABOUT \$900-1,000 PER HOUR. ALOUETTE AND BEELL CAN LAND AT BASE CAMP BUT HAVE VASTLY REDUCED TAKEOFF CAPACITY. ALOUETTE POSSIBLY LAND ABOVE ICEFALL BUT ONLY IN EVENT OF EXTREAME EMERGENCY.

10. PLEASE ADVISE ON ARRIVAL OF ADVANCE TEM MEMBERS.
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